Sharing Our Journey: Developing Public Health Partners.

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It can sometimes be challenging for Tribes to develop quality partnerships with local and state public health partners. Priorities can be different from organization to organization. Oneida has been very successful in developing great relationships with health departments and other public health partners.

Recently, the Oneida public health accreditation coordinator was invited to present at a national conference to talk about Oneida’s journey in developing public health partners. The 90 minute session was co- presented by the public health accreditation coordinator from the Ho Chunk Nation. It was a great opportunity to talk about our journeys in developing our public health partners, including some of the challenges along the way.

We cannot tell our story without talking about our preparation for public health accreditation. Accreditation is about ensuring quality. In preparing for this presentation, we surveyed the local/ city health department the two nations work with every day. To give our audience a full circle view of the great public health partnerships that have developed over time, we included this feedback in the presentation. Overall the there was lots of positive comments. The importance of making and nurturing personal connections came up repeatedly. Some other notable comments included Tribes have great innovative strategies and appreciation of learning some cultural competence from interactions with Tribes.

Included in the session was an interactive exercise to engage the audience. We walked the group through coordinating a meeting between a local health department and a Tribe to discuss roles and responsibilities in the event of a disease outbreak. We feel the audience will take away some strategies and take action to engage the Tribes in the future, as they develop new public health partnerships.

Communities are healthier when public health partners work together for the common goals of health and wellness.

